

Tales Before The Cipher Falls

by LemonCakeOranges

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Summary: As we all might know, the previous summer's tale had found its peaceful conclusion. Now we move on to another chapter of our protagonists' life adventures, though the next few adventures will not be as grandiose as... Well no one would say the apocalypse was great, much more grandiose. But let's see what the future has in store for us... (Rated T for language)

1. The Creature

Had it not rained jelly inside the shack, everything would be ready for the twins' return for their second summer at Gravity Falls.

There Ford was, chasing a creature with unimaginable swiftness, darting across the room, avoiding him. Stan entered the scene while drinking a can of soda. He spat out the soda upon seeing one hell of a mess Ford and this creature was causing.

Now you may be wondering why these two beloved grunkles are doing at Gravity Falls when they were to sail out for an adventure of a lifetime.

Well, they couldn't just let the kids spend their summer at Gravity Falls without them, could they?

And so Stanley and Stanford made a pact; they will return every summer for family bonding and adventures they might encounter. The mystery of Gravity Falls was, after all, far from being revealed.

Back to the situation at hand, Stan had gone and grabbed a baseball bat and swung at the monster scuttling across the floor. He missed. He retrieved the bat but the creature had climbed on his leg and started gnawing on his pants.

"Stanley, don't move," Ford whispered to Stan as he approached stealthily the monster.

The front door slammed open, followed by an ear piercing yell that had announced the arrival of our beloved boyband fanatic and sweater queen, Mabel, and her sweaty nerdy twin brother, Dipper.

"GRUNKLE STAN, GREAT UNCLE FORD! WE'RE HOME!" She had screamed enthusiastically, scaring the creature. The latter seemed to be paralyzed by the loud voice of Mabel and fell on the floor.

"Woah!" Dipper exclaimed and ran to the old men who were looking back and forth from the twins and the slowly dying creature on the floor. "What's that supposed to be? Is it your pet? And is it alright? It looks like it's dying..." He asked curiously, examining it critically.

"I," Ford started, adjusting his glasses, "have no idea. YET, at least. But as Stan and I have observed, it only eats jelly and, when threatened, runs faster than a horse. That and it's weakness is high pitched screaming." He gestured to Mabel who was rummaging through her bag, looking for something.

"AHA!" She exclaimed, pulling out two sweaters. She ran to Ford and Stan and gave them the sweaters. "I made these for you two because I was bored in the bus!"

The two grunkles smiled.

"Thanks Mabel," they said in unison. Stan patted Mabel's shoulder and she grinned at both of them. She gave them a hug.

"Uhh, Great uncle Ford?" Dipper called out as he poked the monstrosity with a pen. "I think it's dead."

"Don't sweat it Dipper." Ford laughs. "It's not important. What's important is that both of you are here and we're going to have a fantastic summer together!"

2. Somewhere In The Woods

"**"But I know We'll meet again some sunny day!"**"

As we all might know, the previous summer's tale had found its peaceful conclusion. Now we move on to another chapter of our protagonists' life adventures, though the next few adventures will not be as grandiose as... Well no one would say the apocalypse was great, much more grandiose. What I meant to say that these tales I will relay to you wouldn't be as huge as them defeating Bill.

That doesn't mean that this story has nothing in for you. Oh, no, quite the contrary. As small as these happenings are, there's something else hidden underneath everything.

The forest is somewhat thicker than Dipper remembers. Not only that but it seems that the thick trees are starting to grow hostile. Shadows dance and dart from tree to tree, avoiding the stray rays of sunlight.

Dipper frowns and decides to abandon the idea of venturing into the unknown. He sighs. So much for planning to go exploring and rediscovering the forest. He'll just find something else to battle the unbearable boredom.

He turns to walk back in the mystery shack, hands in his pockets and slouched. A zephyr blows through the town.

"Be wary of where you tread, or you'll find your friends dead."

Shivers run down Dipper's spine as he hear the soft whisper of the wind to him. He whirls around to turn to the forest, looking for someone. Or rather, something. He approaches the bushes that are swaying to the caresses of the wind. He jumps behind them, hoping to startle whatever was hiding.

To his disappointment, nothing (or no one) is there. He narrows his eyes. He knows, he's sure, that he's not alone. No one in Gravity Falls truly is.

Call it obsession or paranoia but Dipper has been fantasizing the return of Bill the moment he had perched himself in his bed back in Piedmont, a few days after he got back home with Mabel. Looking up at his ceiling with his mind nearly blank, Dipper found himself unable to sleep. His gaze travelled to Mabel who was fast asleep. A small smile found its way to Dipper's lips as he thought of his promise to grow up together with Mabel. He thought of what adventures they'll find or what mischief they could cause until, eventually, the train of thought led him to think of the one entity he hated most, Bill.

Images flashed in his peripheral vision, depicting the world slowly being destroyed by the resuscitated demon. The latter enjoyed the catastrophic sight before him as he deployed his minions to make things catastrophically worse. Upon wrecking havoc, Bill cackled, his laughter traced with insanity. It echoed in Dipper's head that night which kept him awake for a long time.

Now, it's all he could hear amidst the soft rustling of trees and the whispers of the wind - the distant and faint, maniacal laughter of Bill.

The wind blew violently and the leaves of trees shook around him. Dipper's heart skips a beat as he scans his surroundings, all which yields no familiarity to him whatsoever. The forest darkens considerably and everything became eerily quiet. The wind has disappeared and suddenly the shadows become stiff and still. The light from the heavens fades to darkness.

The twilight has come to an end, sun gone and the moon already up in the sky, accompanied by the stars.

In opposition to the fear Dipper feels, Dipper grabs the opportunity and maps out the constellation to distract himself. A bit later he identifies the North Star and hopefully it can guide him out of this wretched place.

There's a soft rustling behind Dipper. He whirls around to see a deer prancing towards him in an urgent manner. The deer stops in front of

Dipper and stomps in place as if to tell him something. The former stops and kneels down.

The two look at each other. The deer jerks its head to its back urgently. Dipper figures that the animal wants him to ride on its back. For whatever reason, it is unbeknownst to Dipper. He gazes into its pensive blue eyes. Weirdly enough, the deer looks like it's pleading for him to get on.

Dipper isn't quite sure of what he's doing or what the deer wants or how it got its sentience and intelligence but it isn't all unnatural in Gravity Falls. Dipper reluctantly approaches the deer and extends his hand. To his surprise, the deer moves its head closer so that they are touching.

There's a rustling of leaves from behind Dipper and both him and the animal look to the source of the noise. The deer's eyes widen and once again it urges Dipper to climb on its back.

Panicked and afraid, Dipper decides to trust the animal and pulls himself on top of the deer's back. Upon seating himself, it immediately gallops away from the noise in such speed that Dipper doubts he was actually riding a deer. The invisible entity seems to follow them as the bushes they pass by becomes disturbed as if someone's passing through them. The deer takes a sharp turn which catches Dipper by surprise. He almost falls down but grab ahold of the deer's ear at which it screeches in pain. The latter hisses at Dipper, something a normal deer would never do, and snaps at him. Dipper lets go of the ear in fright and instead clings onto the neck of the deer. The deer is grateful for this, Dipper figures, because the deer has stopped being hostile to him while running.

Treading swiftly through the forest, the deer swerves a tree and eventually they lost their pursuer. Dipper sighs in relief. They reach a clearing in the forest, a part Dipper knows. The deer slows down into a halt and kneels down to help the boy climb down it. Uttering a thank you to the deer and giving it a small pat on the head, something the deer is happy to receive, Dipper steps away from it and heads home, confused about the predicament he was in a while ago.

The deer, on the other hand, gallops back to where it found Dipper before it had fallen to the floor unconscious. There's a rustle of leaves and the sound of faint, genuine laughter of two entities, carried away by the zephyr.

3. Nightmares

Dipper couldn't sleep later that night.

It wasn't the first time that he was devoid of sleep. In fact he had once gone three days without sleep back at Piedmont. This made his parents worry. And his insomnia kept getting worse to the point it was starting to affect his performances in school, he visited a psychiatrist. He was given pills to help him get his sleep.

Apparently, he had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It wasn't surprising, considering Bill was a rather

terrifying entity that had tried to kill him and Mabel countless number of times. And as much as he would love to believe that Bill was gone for good, he couldn't. He just couldn't. He knew Bill was much more cunning than he seemed. For all that it seemed, Bill faked his death just to give them a false sense of security. And a false sense of security was the last thing he felt.

He didn't feel safe at all.

Dipper slowly got out of bed and took out a bottle of pills from his bag. He stopped taking them when he was half-way through recovery of his psychological trauma, when he was already able to sleep on his own (the psychologist didn't want him being dependent on his medication). He guessed that tonight was one of those nights he would confide in the power of medication just to get his much needed rest.

He was really tired.

As soon as he took one he went back to bed; he started to get drowsy. He closed his eyes and let the arms of sleep envelope him.

"You're awfully persistent, pine tree."

Dipper's eyes shot open. He stared at the ceiling, squinting through the darkness. He didn't need light to know that he was in a sea of monochrome madness, though. He knew.

He elected to remain still, unwilling to face the demon who was most probably watching him and give him the satisfaction of seeing the hint of surprise etched on his face.

"Oh, come on, pine tree, you're a bit too cold to an old friend."

Dipper clenched his teeth and jumped out of bed. He glowered at the triangular demon floating just above Mabel, his one eye shaped into a smirk.

"Friend?!" Dipper repeated, his voice shaking with anger. "You were never our friend!" Dipper paused, looked Bill into his eye. "I knew you weren't dead. I knew that was all a ploy, a joke, a trick! And before you start tricking me to do your bidding, you can't. I already know all your games, Bill!"

Bill laughed at his reaction, putting his hand on his figurative forehead and wiping imaginary beads of sweat he got from laughing. "Oh, man, pine tree, you're just as prudent and naive as I remember." He emulated a sigh and put his arms on what Dipper estimated was his waist or something. "But stop flattering yourself," Bill remarked, "there's nothing I want from you that could lead me back to power."

Dipper was a bit hurt and relieved at this. But then again, "If you don't need me for anything," Dipper started, narrowing his eyes in suspicion. "Why are you here."

Bill suddenly appeared beside him, wrapping his arm around Dipper's shoulder and leaned closer to his ear as if meaning to whisper something.

"OH, I JUST WANT TO SEE YOU SUFFER!" he screamed at Dipper's ear, each word coated with sugary enthusiasm that it was poisonous. He was even more insane compared to any demon bent over the desire to kill. Dipper jerked back at the volume of his voice and Bill madly guffawed at his reaction. Dipper stumbled backwards and tripped on some of his things scattered on the floor, sending him crashing down onto the floor. He fell down with a loud thud. Dipper sat up and gazed on Bill. He was both aggravated and mortified at what he said. He wanted to lunge at him, to show him he's powerless in the mindscape. But terror took its hold on Dipper and he was frozen on the spot with fear as Bill laughed, conjuring into existence that made his blood run cold, reawakening the nightmarish memories he forced himself to forget.

And as if everything wasn't as bad as it was, it got worse.

"Hmm, I never got to kill off Shooting Star," He mused, snapping his fingers and slowly suspending Mabel up in the air. She was still fast asleep, oblivious to the chaos around her. "Did I, Pine Tree?" Dipper blinked at Bill a bit too innocently for Dipper's liking, his blood draining from his face. Bill swiped his hand in mid air and his fingers turned into sharp claws.

"Oh, however I should kill her," Bill pondered aloud, bringing Mabel up close to him and inspecting her. "Should I slit her throat?" He made a quick swiping gesture near her neck. "Should I gut her out, eat her innards and replace it with snakes and spiders?"

Dipper cringed at this one and he looked away, not wanting to see what sick joke he was going to do. He heard the demon snap his fingers and something forced him to look at Bill. "Focus Pine tree." He told him, vivacious. "You wouldn't want to miss Shooting Star's death. I need it etched in your brain so that I can replay it again and again in your mind for my sheer entertainment. I want it to haunt you for life!" His fingers dug through her eye sockets and, with an effort, pulled out her eyes.

But Dipper realized the absence of blood and how pale and transparent the eyes seemed. It wasn't real. None of these were real. He clenched his hands into a fist, adrenaline pumping through his veins. He bit his lips.

"You can't trick me Bill!" He screamed at him, standing up. "None of this is real!"

Bill chuckled. "Who are you to know what's real or not?" He asked, trailing his razor blade sharp finger down her throat, leaving a trail of blood. Whether this blood was real or not, Dipper wasn't sure. "Nightmares are illusions created by the mind, yes, that is true. But these illusions are made real by your brain. And though these might not be real to others, it is real to you! And trust me when I say this Pine Tree," Bill took his finger off of Mabel's throat, "your sister and your friends are never going to see the light of day!_"

Like snakes, vines crept around Mabel, entangling themselves around her. Tighter and tighter it wrapped itself around her the thicker it became. The vines morphed into a thick bark until it grew into a tree. Upon this, she was awakened. Her eyes widened in

panic.

"Dipper, what's happening?" She asked, fear in her eyes. "Dipper!" She screamed his name. Her voice sounded so distant, so faint. "Dipper! Dipper!" She called again and again until she was fully engulfed by the tree. Dipper was frozen on the spot, not knowing what to do. On where her face used to be seemed to be a ghastly mark on the tree of a tormented soul's expression pleading for help.

"Dipper!" He heard her cry again.

"Mabel?" He called out to her. His surroundings glitched out. Dipper looked at Bill who blinked at him... or at least maybe he was winking.

"DIPPER!" A new voice called out... Grunkle Stan? " JESUS FREAKING CHRIST! FORD, WAKE HIM UP! GET YOUR ASS HERE AND HELP HIM!"

"Alright! Alright!" Ford's worried voice echoed faintly. "Here, everyone, put your hands on his-"

"Well, I guess this is goodbye," Bill said with a sigh, still overzealous but somewhat disappointed. "See you next time Pine Tree! Remember, I'll be back to _fuck you up_" He clapped his hands and he summoned Mabel's disembodied head filled with worms and dropped it on Dipper's lap before he laughed and disappeared.

"AAAAAAAARGH!" Dipper screamed, sitting up, trying to get the head off his lap before the insects crawled on him. He momentarily paused, confused. The head was no longer there.

A hand touched Dipper's shoulder and he jerked away.

"Hey, bro-bro," Mabel said, worried. "It's me Mabel. Are you alright? What happened?"

"M-m-mabel?" Dipper stammered, crawling away from Mabel, Ford, and Stan, all who were looking at him in concern. He looked around him. His surroundings were all coloured. He was awake. He felt tears fill his eyes and he threw himself on his sister, hugging her tightly, cherishing the fact that she was still alive.

"Hey," Mabel hushed Dipper's quiet sobs. Her voice smooth and soothing to Dipper's ears and he grasped her tighter. "It's alright," she reassured him, "it was just a dream. Whatever happened, it isn't real."

Mabel broke from his embrace and grasped his shoulder. Both their eyes met. Dipper couldn't hold his tears back and kept crying, terrified at his dream.

"It isn't real, do you understand me, bro-bro?" Dipper nodded in acknowledgement. "Bill's dead, remember? He's not coming back." Mabel patted Dipper's back as he started to calm down. He hugged her again and this time she didn't move away.

"You d-d-died in my dream, Mabel," he whispered weakly to her. Mabel squeezed his hand and shushed him.

"I'm alive right now and that's what matters." Mabel flashed a grin at Dipper and he tried to smile back.

"Don't leave me," he told her, his voice quivering. "Please?"

Mabel laughed wholeheartedly and ruffled Dipper's hair. "Of course not, dippingsauce. I won't ever leave you. Promise."

End
file.